United Nations A/54/165

General Assembly

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Fifty-fourth session
Item 118 of the provisional agenda*
Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors

Hiring and use of consultants in the Secretariat

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly a letter dated 29 June 1999 from the Chairman of the Board of Auditors transmitting the comments of the Board on the report of the Secretary-General on the hiring and use of consultants in the Secretariat submitted in accordance with section VIII of General Assembly resolution 53/221 of 7 April 1999.

* A/54/150.

99-19859 (E) 230799

Annex

Letter dated 29 June 1999 from the Chairman of the Board of Auditors addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the comments of the Board of Auditors on the report of the Secretary-General on the hiring and use of consultants in the Secretariat submitted in accordance with section VIII, paragraph 3, of General Assembly resolution 53/221 of 7 April 1999 (see appendix).

(*Signed*) Osei Tutu **Prempeh**
Auditor General of Ghana
and Chairman
United Nations Board of Auditors

Appendix

Comments of the Board of Auditors on the report of the Secretary-General on the hiring and use of consultants in the Secretariat

Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in section VIII, paragraph 3, of its resolution 53/221 of 7 April 1999, reiterated its request that the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, as endorsed in resolution 51/226 of 25 April 1997 and 53/204 of 18 December 1998 on the hiring and use of consultants, be fully implemented, and requested the Secretary-General to submit a report through the Board to the Assembly at the main part of its fifty-fourth session. The recommendations of the Board of Auditors are contained in its reports to the General Assembly.[1]

2. The present paper sets out the views of the Board of Auditors on the report of the Secretary-General on the hiring and use of consultants in the Secretariat (A/54/164) as requested by the General Assembly.

3. The report of the Secretary-General addresses, in paragraph 2, the five recommendations in the reports of the Board as referred to above. Those recommendations were as follows:

(a) **Recommendation 1.** The terms of reference of consultants should be prepared more precisely, including objectives, targets and output delivery dates. Necessary guidelines should be issued to all requesting organizations and departments;

(b) **Recommendation 2.** To ensure selection of consultants on a more competitive basis, all proposals for consideration of a sole candidate for recruitment should be actively discouraged. Appropriate norms should be established for selection of consultants from a wider geographical base;

(c) **Recommendation 3.** Requisitioning units should be required to plan their project and programme personnel requirements in advance and provide adequate lead time to the various personnel services within the Organization so that proper recruitment action can be taken in compliance with the established rules;

(d) **Recommendation 4.** Recruitment officers in the Department for Development Support and Management Services (now the Department of Economic and Social Affairs) should be given improved access to comparative information on consultants' fees. The basis for fixing the remuneration of consultants should be recorded;

(e) **Recommendation 5.** The assessment form on consultants should be reviewed to make it more detailed and to indicate more clearly the quality of the consultant's work and consultant's ability to undertake future assignments.

Comments of the Board of Auditors

4. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 51/226 of 3 April 1997 and decision 52/475 of 31 March 1998, the Secretary-General issued comprehensive policy guidelines on the terms of reference, selection, hiring and renewal of consultants. The Board welcomes the issuance of the comprehensive guidelines, which are contained in document A/53/385 of

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 5* (A/51/5), vol. I; and ibid., *Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 5* (A/53/5), vol. I.

15 September 1998, and which substantially addressed the issues and concerns raised by the Board in its reports.

5. During its ongoing audits of consultants, the Board intends to monitor the application of the guidelines by departments, as well as the implementation of recommendations on the need to plan their project and programme personnel requirements in advance and to provide adequate lead time for recruitment action by the various personnel services and the fixing of remuneration of consultants.

6. The Board looks forward to the introduction of Release 5 of the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS), which will enable the Secretariat to identify candidates on a broader basis through a worldwide exchange of information. This should provide the Secretariat with a better means to secure a wider geographical distribution of consultancies.

7. With regard to evaluation of consultants' performance, the Board notes that the Administration proposes to introduce a detailed evaluation form to measure the quality of work performed and to take into account the goals established in the terms of reference as well as compliance with delivery dates. In this connection, the Board notes that Release 5 of IMIS would also facilitate the integration of evaluations of consultants' performance into the central occupational rosters for worldwide use.

8. In conclusion, the Board welcomes the action taken by the Secretary-General to implement the recommendations of the Board. The Board considers that such action will strengthen the Secretariat's ability to recruit, manage and evaluate consultants in the most cost-effective and equitable manner.

Acknowledgement

9. The Board of Auditors wishes to express its appreciation for the cooperation and assistance extended by the Secretary-General, his officers and staff.

(*Signed*) Osei Tutu **Prempeh**
Auditor General of Ghana

(*Signed*) Sir John **Bourn**
Comptroller and Auditor General
of the United Kingdom of
Great Britain and Northern Ireland

(*Signed*) Vijay Krishna **Shunglu**
Comptroller and Auditor General of India

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General Assembly

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Fifty-fourth session
Item 68 of the preliminary list*

Verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification

Verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 52/31 of 9 December 1997, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its fifty-fourth session on further views received from Member States pursuant to resolution 50/61 of 12 December 1995. The views received pursuant to the latter resolution were contained in a report of the Secretary-General on verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification, dated 6 August 1997, to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session (A/52/269) and related to a report of the Secretary-General, dated 22 September 1990, on the same subject (A/50/377).

II. Developments

2. Since 1997, the international community has continued its efforts in the field of the verification of treaties in a number of areas.

3. With respect to weapons of mass destruction, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has pursued its efforts to ensure the full implementation of the verification provisions of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. As the Director-General of the organization reported to the fourth session of the Conference of States Parties in June 1999, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, over the course of its two years' existence, has undertaken 500 inspections and its inspectors have witnessed the destruction of about 3,000 tons of chemical agents and of more than 700,000 munitions and containers. The Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization has continued to concentrate on setting up the global verification regime envisaged in the Treaty so that it may be operational by the time the Treaty enters into force. It has reported that its first technical training programme, to familiarize operators with a specific verification technology and the use of instruments, was held at Vienna in October 1998, followed by in-depth training at facilities in Argentina, Norway and the United States of America. The parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and Their Destruction have, over the past year, intensified their efforts to formulate an efficient, cost-effective and practical verification protocol to the Convention.

* A/54/50.

99-20431 (E) 130799

4. Since the 1997 report on verification, the system for monitoring compliance with the provisions of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction has begun to take shape. It relies in part on annual reporting of transparency measures by Governments on various categories of information, such as the total number of stockpiled anti-personnel mines, the location of mined areas, the status of programmes for the conversion or decommissioning of production facilities and the status of programmes for destruction. It was agreed at the first Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention, held in Maputo, in May 1999, that easy access by all to these reports would improve the coordination and effectiveness of global mine-clearance; thus, like data reported to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, these data will be published on the Internet.

5. With respect to the United Nations Special Commission, as of 16 December 1998, activities to verify Iraq's compliance with relevant Security Council resolutions ceased.

6. During the past 18 months, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research has undertaken and published research in the area of verification (see the report of the Institute (A/54/...)).

Annex
Views received from Member States

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]

The Government of Mexico considers that verification in all its aspects is an essential component of the arms limitation and disarmament programme. Adequate and satisfactory verification of international agreements is indispensable in order to create an atmosphere of confidence and security. Multilateral verification adds an additional element of trust, thanks to its independent and impartial nature, particularly in the case of countries that do not have the means for determining on their own whether or not the obligations of other States have been met.

Mexico is persuaded that the present international atmosphere is conducive to the implementation of cooperation activities and the strengthening of United Nations capabilities in the promotion of peace and collective security. With the establishment of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and the current negotiations on possible verification measures in connection with the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, it might be possible to develop joint verification services as the first step in a process that should culminate with the creation of a United Nations agency that would be responsible for verification in all its aspects. Such a process would also encourage the improvement and creation of new technologies in this field; in particular, this would benefit those countries that are least able to channel resources to such research.

Mexico attaches great importance to the activities that have been carried out in the field of verification, and participated in the group of governmental experts on verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification, which met in 1994 and 1995. Mexico supports the recommendations set forth in the report of the group of experts (A/50/377), particularly on the establishment of new principles and guidelines for consensus in the field of verification.

Mexico supported General Assembly resolutions 50/61 and 52/31, on verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification. In so doing, it reiterated its commitment to the full implementation of the Programme of Action of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, in particular paragraphs 91 and 92, as well as article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in which the Parties undertook to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, through suitable non-discriminatory and non-intrusive mechanisms and procedures that do not jeopardize the economic and social development of countries.

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Fifty-fourth session
Item 72 of the preliminary list*
Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament

Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 53/73 of 4 December 1998, in which the Secretary-General was requested to seek the views of Member States on his report on the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament of 28 July 1998 (A/53/202) and to make recommendations on possible approaches to a multilaterally negotiated, universally acceptable, non-discriminatory guidelines for international transfers of dual-use goods and technologies and high technologies with military applications.

2. In a note verbale of 19 March 1999, the Secretary-General drew the attention of Member States to paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 53/73. To date, the Secretary-General has received one reply. In the absence of adequate information from Member States, the Secretary-General is not in a position to make recommendations as envisaged in resolution 53/73.

* A/54/50.

99-20437 (E) 130799

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 53/73 of 4 December 1998, paragraphs 4 and 6 of which read as follows:

> "4. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament,[1] and requests the Secretary-General to seek the views of the Member States on this report and to make recommendations on the possible approaches to a multilaterally negotiated, universally acceptable, non-discriminatory guidelines for international transfers of dual-use goods and technologies and high technologies with military applications, in a report to be submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly no later than at its fifty-fourth session;
>
> ...
>
> "6. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fourth session the item entitled 'Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament'".

2. The above-mentioned report, which was submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 51/39 of 10 December 1996 and 52/33 of 9 December 1997, contained an assessment of trends in selected fields of technology: nuclear technology; space technology; materials technology; information technology; and biotechnology. This was undertaken in pursuance of resolution 51/39, in which the Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to update and further develop an earlier report dated 17 October 1990, entitled "Scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security" (A/45/568), in order to evaluate the impact of recent scientific and technological developments, in particular those which have potential military applications. In resolution 52/33, the Assembly recalled resolution 51/39 and its request to the Secretary-General to submit an updated report no later than at its fifty-third session.

3. The report of 17 October 1990 contained assessments of trends and developments in five major fields: nuclear technology, space technology, materials technology, information technology and biotechnology. The assessments were prepared by scientists who presented their papers for discussion at a high-level conference on "New trends in science and technology: implications for international peace and security" hosted by the Government of Japan at Sendai, in April 1990. The papers presented were further elaborated in the light of the discussions held there.

4. In pursuance of the request contained in resolutions 51/39 and 52/33, the experts who had prepared the original contributions for the 1990 report were requested to update their earlier assessments by providing a brief overview of broad new trends since the earlier report, specifying any new trends with illustrations where possible, and making observations on peaceful and other applications of latest developments. The updated assessments were reproduced and represented the views of the authors.[1]

II. Action taken by the Secretary-General

5. In a note verbale of 19 March 1999, the Secretary-General drew the attention of Member States to paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 53/73. To date, the Secretary-General has received one reply which is contained in the annex to the present report. Any further replies will be issued as addenda to the present document.

6. In the absence of adequate information from Member States, the Secretary-General is not in a position to make recommendations on the possible approaches to a multilaterally negotiated, universally acceptable, non-discriminatory guidelines for international transfers of dual-use goods and technologies and high technologies with military applications, as requested in paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 53/73.

Notes

[1] A/53/202.

Annex

Information received from Governments

United States of America

[Original: English]

[20 May 1999]

1. The United States continues to see no need for multilaterally negotiated, universally acceptable, non-discriminatory guidelines for international transfers of dual-use technologies with military applications. Such an instrument is unnecessary. This issue is better handled through existing arms control measures and international arrangements.